



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NEW BOOKS REVIEWED.

BY JAMES HUNEKER, HENRY T. FINCK, EDWARD PORRITT, A NAVAL
OBSERVER AND JOSEPH S. AUERBACH.

GEORGE SAND.*

THE newest book about George Sand is by an English writer, Francis Gribble, and is baldly entitled "George Sand and Her Lovers." A few years ago such a head-line could hardly have been possible in England, nor can we altogether admire its taste. George was a maternal nymphomaniac, yet the most interesting part of her was not her lovers. We hold no brief for or against her conduct. She was the victim of circumstances at the beginning. She craved notoriety later on. At times she acted as if she were the self-elected avenger of man's inhumanity to woman. That she was the impassioned creature the world believed her to be, or that she believed herself to be, we beg to doubt. Dumas even denies to her much temperament. Cerebral she always was, too often morbid and curious—and avid as to the matter of *copy*! It must not be forgotten that she was a sphinx of the ink-well. She worked like a master builder for four decades, worked when she was happy and unhappy. She was the first female journalist—using the word in a broad sense. Everything she suffered or enjoyed she later turned into printed matter, and it is not difficult to realize that once the habit had crystallized, once the sixth sense, the news sense, had become vitalized, she went along the broad and primrose path setting off the pyrotechnics of passion. She speared many victims with her Bengal lights and silken phrases, and whenever a new novel of hers appeared the Boulevard asked: "Who's the man now?" She changed her lovers almost annually.

* "George Sand and Her Lovers." By Francis Gribble. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Mr. Gribble's book contains little that is new. It is a string of readable, very readable, gossipy anecdotes and not the portrait of an extraordinary woman. You may find that portrait, with literary criticism added, in Caro's monograph, and in Samuel Rocheblave's "George Sand et La Fille" (Calmann-Levy, Publisher). Nearly all the new things about the quarrel of Solange Sand with her mother M. Rocheblave has already told us, and he was the first to print the recently discovered correspondence, slight as it is, between Chopin and Solange—who had incurred her mother's wrath by marrying the sculptor Clésinger, a man of Bohemian habits. Chopin sided with Solange in the row, and this was one of the reasons, the chief one, possibly, that caused George's rupture with the Polish composer. And all this I have told in my biography of Chopin, years ago; told of George Sand boxing her son-in-law's ears, and of the literary partnership later formed between "Soli" and the Marquis Alfieri, the nephew of the great Italian poet. Solange held a Salon in Paris, where came Gambetta, Jules Ferry, Floquet, Taine, Herve, Henri Fouquier, Weiss the critic—who described her, and he of all men could describe her, as having the "curved Hebraic nose of her mother and hair coal black." She died in 1899 at Nahant, her mother's house. Maurice Sand, the son, died in 1883. But these things Mr. Gribble does not tell, and despite the title of his book he by no means furnishes a complete account—who could!—of the lovers of George Sand. He speaks of Sandeau, de Musset, Dr. Pagello, the disappointed Venetian lover, Michel de Bourges, Felicien Malléville, Pierre Leroux, Chopin, Prosper Mérimée—this is not the chronological order—Manceau, and the platonic friendship with Flaubert. But where is that sly old voluptuary Sainte-Beuve, Franz Liszt—who was her lover notwithstanding denials; George confessed herself that "le petit *Litz* was fonder of praying to the Virgin than of her"—and Delacroix, Dumas, and Calmatta the mezzotinter, and the pianist Hermann? "Puzzi" was his nickname; later he became a discalced Carmelite friar. Are these all? Who dare say? That she killed de Musset we doubt; absinthe helped matters along, and his illness in Venice turns out to have been delirium tremens. Chopin was a consumptive, and here the case looks ominous. Yet he survived by several years the separation. That she threw him overboard as she threw de Musset there can be no doubt.

Liszt she could not enslave, and after a week she parted with Mérimée by mutual consent. Each loathed the other. Stendhal made merry of the affair in his usual brutal, subtle style. The sanest friendship she ever had was with Flaubert—their correspondence proves it—and her influence on the old grumbling giant of Croisset was healthy. In her mature years Madame Sand—who was born in 1804 and called Lucile-Aurore Dupin, descending from a choice chain of illegitimate rowdy and demi-royal ancestors—became optimistic, matronly and proper. She was the cheerful milch cow for her children. It is assisting at a delicious comedy to read her warnings to her son Maurice about actresses. She tells in her memoirs of Sarah Bernhardt trying to poison herself. “I spoke to her,” says George, in her most maternal manner, “of her son and of the love and care she owed him. . . . Sarah burst into tears and sobbed aloud. She assured me that she was horrified at the life she had led . . . etc. A few days afterwards, coming late to the theatre, I passed on the staircase Sarah Bernhardt and her sister Jeannie on their way to the Bal Bullier in male costume. . . . Beware of women of the theatre.” Precisely. It is the warning of the *Cabotine* who had reformed to the *Cabotine* who had not. And was Manceau dead at this time? But Madame Sarah says nothing of all this in her newly published memoirs. The old guard surrenders but never dies!

Sand was not beautiful. Edouard Grenier says that she was short and stout. “Her eyes were wonderful, but a little too close together.” Do you remember Heine’s description: “Femme avec l’œil sombre”? Black they were, these eyes, and they reminded Grenier at once of unpolished marble and of velvet. “Her nose was thick and not overshapely. Her mouth was rather coarse and her chin small. She spoke with great simplicity, and her manners were very quiet.” With this rather negative physical apparatus she conquered men like a Napoleon in petticoats. Even prim old Thiers tried to kiss her, and her indignation was epical. He giggled in a silly way when reproved. It seems incredible. Do you recall the Bonnat portrait of the statesman? Chopin at first disliked George Sand—by the way, it should be said that Gribble’s account of the Chopin *liaison* is imperfect. Liszt was never wholly won. Mérimée despised her in his frigid fashion. Michel de Bourges treated her roughly. Poor Alfred de

Musset, alone, seemed to have loved her romantically and to the last. What was the attraction? She had brains and magnetism. That she loved all her lovers is impossible, though she is a fine object-lesson for those who maintain that women are polyandrous. The truth is that she suffered at first severely, and being an artist shrewdly made of her suffering a literary asset. That she had an operative conscience we do not know beyond the inescapable fact that she preached—oh! how she preached!—morality in her later stories. Compared with the feminine fiction of to-day Sand's is almost idyllic. But she is its ancestor. She acted in life what so many latter-day ladies urge others to do—and never attempt themselves. Brave George!

The Sandeau episode was only an episode. She emerged from it carrying away half of his name, but not his heart. Mr. Gribble does not relate the anecdote in its entirety, the one told by Jules Clarétie. Here is the true version of this particular affair. In 1870, when Madame Sand was an old woman, full of honors, she went one day to visit the Minister of Instruction. There, being detained in the antechamber, she fell into a pleasant conversation with a well-groomed old gentleman who wore the rosette of the Legion of Honor. After ten minutes' chat the unknown consulted his watch, arose, and then bowed to Madame Sand.

"If I could always find such a charming companion I would visit the Ministry often," he gallantly said, and went away. The novelist called an attendant. "Who is that amiable old gentleman?" she asked. "Ah, that is M. Jules Sandeau of the French Academy!" And he, on going out, inquired the lady's name. George Sand! What a lot of head-shaking must have ensued! Maxime Ducamp spitefully suggested the following as an epitaph for Louise Colet (who imitated Sand in fiction and worried both de Musset and Flaubert): "Here lies the woman who compromised Victor Cousin, made Alfred de Musset ridiculous, calumniated Gustave Flaubert and tried to assassinate Alphonse Karr: *Requiescat in Pace.*" If this formidable roll-call could be evoked by such an insignificant creature as Colet, what a Homeric catalogue might be sonorously chanted down the corridor of Time in the name of George Sand! Doubtless, we should forgive all if we knew all. Charity covers a multitude of missteps. But we don't know all. We only know too much.

JAMES HUNEKER.